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ABSTRACT

This paper uses an anthropological framework to examine the social interactions of black faculty in predominantly white colleges and universities with their white and black colleagues. Joking, formal, and avoidance relations are examined among a regional sample of professors, with particular emphasis on Black Studies faculty. (Author)

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ABSTRACT

AMBIGUITIES IN RACE RELATIONS: BLACKS AND WHITES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BY

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DIVISION G: THE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

STUDENT-FACULTY ATTITUDES

THIS PAPER USES AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK TO EXAMINE THE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS OF BLACK FACULTY IN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WITH THEIR WHITE AND BLACK COLLEAGUES. JOKING, FORMAL, AND AVOIDANCE RELATIONS ARE EXAMINED AMONG A REGIONAL SAMPLE OF PROFESSORS, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON BLACK STUDIES FACULTY.

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AMBIGUITIES IN RACE RELATIONS:
BLACKS AND WHITES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Research Note

By

David M. Rafky*

INTRODUCTION

Prior to 1900, the presence of blacks on the faculties of predominantly white colleges was rare. During the next fifty years, the movement of blacks to positions in white schools was slow and uneven (Moss, 1958). Three events during 1968-69, however, spurred many "traditionally closed," predominantly white colleges and universities outside the South to recruit black faculty: (1) the assassination of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.; (2) student disorders during the first six months of 1969--one-half of which concerned such issues as black studies, black representation in university governance, and the recruitment of black students and faculty ("Student Strikes: 1968-69," 1970); and, (3) numerous civil rights compliance reviews of colleges and universities by the Office of Education (Jacobson, March 29, 1971).

An analysis of the interpersonal problems faced by black professors in white institutions may help smooth the path of other blacks to these schools and shed light on the dynamics of race relations. Toward this end,

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questionnaires were mailed to 699 black and 699 white faculty members in predominantly white colleges and universities outside the South. Rosters of black professors were obtained from officials of 184 four-year, degree granting, predominantly white, non-southern institutions with more than 300 students. An earlier survey by A. Gilbert Belles in 1968 indicated that the sample of 699 blacks included as much as 75 to 90 percent of the target population. The comparison group of whites was selected from 300 available college and university bulletins and matched with the blacks on academic field, size, location, and control (public or private) of employing school. Seventy-nine percent (554) of the blacks responded, compared to 63 percent (442) of the whites.

ASSUMPTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Black professors complain of social slights and rebuffs, presumably due to prejudice, by their white colleagues. A black respondent at a large midwestern state college explains:

> My presence here at . . . State College has been upsetting. It is hard, I find, to have talent and a willingness to work in an older teaching society. A man that I treated as if he were my brother, has been sneaky and unethical due to my new popularity among the student body. He is a southern white.

Furthermore, most of the black professors feel that the institutions in which they work are racist; 90 percent believe that schools outside the South exclude black faculty from their pool of qualified applicants and more than one quarter agree that blacks must be better qualified than whites to be hired or to receive tenure.

The black professor also has difficulty relating to whites because of status dilemma. The black scholar as a black and a professor occupies contradictory statuses in which the "powerful" attributes of race and professional standing "clash," resulting in a kind of marginality which Hughes (1958) calls status dilemma. Whites tend to perceive blackness as a master status-determining trait which overpowers other characteristics; for them, race is a (socially imposed) handicap which limits access to the rights, privileges, and rewards of American society. Professional standing, however, with its connotations of privilege and respect, is also an important attribute, and these attributes "clash" in the black professor. As a result of status dilemma, white professors are confused by the "unusual" combination of racial and occupational statuses of their black colleagues. Blacks complain that as a consequence, whites react to them in an inconsistent manner--they "do not know just how to treat" us; their attitude is "sometimes patronizing and sometimes one of acceptance." More often than not, whites respond to the black professors as members of a despised and pitied lower caste. For example, one black reports that white faculty "all tend to assume that a Negro, no matter how well trained, is a dummy." Whites show an "unwillingness" to see them in their more prestigeous "professional positions" by, for example, making the assumption that a female black professor is a secretary. The comments of a black professor describe status dilemma:

> Some still resist the idea that a black man can be equally qualified. It usually surprises them to learn of black faculty credentials. For example, one black administrator soon to be hired. Rumor immediately was that his credentials were questionable and skin color was the only motive. This

man is now completing his Ph.D and he was the first director of the Headstart program in the area.

When describing sources of tension with white colleagues, blacks most frequently mention the insincerity and dishonesty that many white "so-called liberals" display in "their pretense of being liberals." Black professors describe these "white dilettantes--people who profess liberalism but still want to know 'what they can do about the problem' or 'what is being done about the problem now'" as "uninvolved, conservative, fearful people, doing whatever, in limited involvement, simply because it is fashionable . . . to 'endorse' the black struggle."

While prejudice and status dilemma lead to black hostility toward whites, professors must nevertheless avoid conflict if they are to realize their shared (educational) institutional and personal goals. Radcliffe-Brown (1952, p. 92), the British anthropologist, asks: How can a relationship which combines hostility and cooperation "be given a stable, ordered form?"

Joking, which combines friendliness and antagonism, is a socially permitted form of disrespect and license which serves to prevent the outbreak of strife between black and white professors. Joking can be used with impugnity, since it is (ostensibly) not meant seriously and, therefore, cannot be taken seriously. In a general sense, participants in such interracial encounters are unified by their alliance to adhere to a particular form of relationship. Specifically:

> Any serious hostility is prevented by the playful antagonism of teasing, and this in its regular repetition is a constant expression

> or remainder of that social disjunction which is one of the essential components of the relation, while the social conjunction is maintained by the friendliness that takes no offense at an insult. (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952, p. 92)

Furthermore, joking prevents open conflict by emphasizing the values common to all participants in the interaction. The fact that both the joker and the butt of the joke understand the joke indicates that they share a common perspective and the desire to continue or save the interaction. Gluckman (1965, p. 101), for example, found that Tonga "clan-jokers" who steal sacred meat from the funerals of enemy clansmen and otherwise make light of their solemn ceremonies are tolerated because they are engaging in behavior which:

> [I]s connected with Tonga ideas about the fundamental values of human life and social existence. In Tongaland these ultimate moral values are connected with enduring groups, the clans, in which membership is derived from the very process of being born to a mother--an obvious enough fact, but one basic to patrilineal as well as matrilineal systems of kinship, since men can only produce heirs through their wives.

A more "modern" instance of the conjoining function of joking is reported in Harvard Business School's study of the Industrial Controls Corporation. There, white workers "kidded" black workers by calling them "niggers" in a "good natured way." Insofar as the black workers "took the joking, reciprocated somewhat, but did not show anger or hostility, they were acknowledging behavioristically their willingness to maintain the group or not cause trouble" (Zaleznik et al., 1956, p. 377).

ZALEZNIK

Since we assume that joking prevents black-white conflict, black professors should joke more with whites than whites joke among themselves. Critiques may point out, however, that humor also serves other functions. For example, on the psychological level: joking expresses unconscious anxiety and hostility toward others (Freud, 1938) or toward one's self (Fluegel, 1964); joking in the form of banter or irony may be used to consciously ridicule (Burns, 1953); humor may also be ego-gratifying and thus necessary for efficient ego functioning and stability (Levine, 1968). Sociologically: joking as "kidding" supports group cohesion at the expense of others present while "storytelling" does the same thing by ridiculing people "behind their backs" (Corwin, 1965); jokers often introduce novel ideas to a group and sanction members who transcend the collective morality (Epstein, 1968); and so on. Therefore, the hypothesis must be strengthened by a content analysis of faculty statements which reveals the rapport establishing nature of interracial joking.

A functional alternative to the joking relationship of mutual disrespect and license is formality, a contractural relationship in which participants agree to be grave, reserved, restrained, and respectful. We assume that both joking and formality establish rapport among black and white faculty with divergent interests, but the methods by which this end is achieved are opposite:

> The joking relationship is in some ways the exact opposite of a contractural relation. Instead of specific duties to be fulfilled there is privileged disrespect . . . and the only obligation is not to take offense at the disrespect so long as it is kept within certain bounds defined by custom. In a true contractural

> relationship [such as formality] the two parties are conjoined by a definite common interest in reference to which each of them accepts specific obligations. It makes no difference that in other matters their interests may be divergent. . . . The alliance by extreme respect . . . prevents such conflict but keeps the parties conjoined. (Radcliffee-Brown, 1952, p. 103)

Formal interaction is characterized by adherence to precise and minute regulations of action and so prevents the dissolution of problematic confrontations by focusing behavior. This is seen, for example, in ritualized confrontations of black physicians and white patients. The patient qua patient is passive, follows orders, answers questions, etc. The physician qua physician, seeks information restricted to the patient's medical history and maintains an attitude of aloofness and scientific disinterest. So long as patient and physician adhere to these rules, the interaction continues. Each is able to anticipate the behavior of the other and adjust his own behavior accordingly; there are no "surprises" and no embarrassments since behaviors and interpretations associated with racial statuses are not permitted.

Avoidance is an elaboration of the formal relationship; it "has all the implications of the polite form plus the obligation never to have face to face contact" (Beals and Hoijer, 1959, p. 450). Like joking and formality, avoidance conjoins black and white faculty with disparate interests; potential interactants are conjoined by their alliance to avoid one another. Beals and Hoijer describe how avoidance relations in the Chiricahua Apache family "affirm the solidarity of the joint family and . . . regulate the social interactions of kin so as to provide for

cooperation and harmony both within and between joint families":

> Males entering the joint family as husbands are required to avoid or maintain only the most formal relations with their wives' consanguine kin. The reason for this is evident: a woman, when married, leaves her parents wickium and goes to live in another with her husband, but remains within the encampment of the joint family. Preoccupation with her husband and later with her children considerably alters her formerly intimate association with her parents and other consanguine kin within the joint family. This disruption, if unprovided for, may lead to trouble and a consequent loss of the husband, an economic asset to the joint family. To prevent potentially disruptive relations between a man and the affinal kind he is expected to live with and serve, Chiricahua culture strictly limits their social interactions and so helps to insure the harmony of the joint family. (Beals and Hoijer, 1959, pp. 449-50)

In summary, it is assumed that joking, formality, and avoidance prevent conflict between black and white faculty which might otherwise result from prejudice and status ambiguity. Consequently, we hypothesize that these modes of interaction more often characterize black-white encounters than intraracial contacts. Of course there are other ways of "handling" ambiguities in race relations, such as segregating audiences of a multiplicity of roles played under conditions of high visibility, becoming a "specialist" in a single role, and even racial "passing." We focus on joking, formality, and avoidance because of their functional coherence. Joking and formality are ACTUALLY A "two sides of the same coin"

or different dimensions of social contract, while avoidance is merely an elaboration of the formal relation. Avoidance is indeed a relationship, since each potential interactant regulates his behavior vis-a-vis detailed expectations about the habits and whereabouts of the other. Furthermore, there are other ambiguities in encounters which may or may not be relevant to racial interactions, such as the sexual status of interactants. As we point out in the beginning of the next section, patterns of joking, formality, and avoidance did not emerge when the respondents were cross-classified by a number of control variables, including sex. Differences in joking, formality and avoidance, therefore, may be attributed to racial differences.

THE FINDINGS: JOKING

In elaborating the findings, the respondents were cross-classified by a number of variables taken one, two, and three at a time: background socio-economic status, sex, region of origin (North versus South), age, highest degree (doctorate versus ABD or masters), quantity of professional publications, rank, field, tenure, type (public or private) and quality of employing school. Failing to uncover consistent patterns of joking, formality and avoidance for the various subgroups of faculty, we searched for and found a variable which cuts across many careers and backgrounds: black studies. Almost 40 percent of the black respondents are engaged in black studies, either as teachers, administrators and/or counselors. Comparisons of these blacks and blacks and whites in general are presented in Table I.

///Table I about here///

Table I, contrary to the hypothesis, shows that black faculty in general do not joke with whites more than whites joke among themselves. In

fact, one group of blacks, those in black studies, engage in interracial joking less than whites report intraracial joking. We shall return to this finding later. In agreement with our predictions, however, sizable proportions of blacks and whites indicate that their joking does serve to establish rapport, and this is particularly true for blacks who are not associated with black studies programs. The following comments made by two blacks illustrate the conjoining function of joking:

> When I came here last September I was spiritually at very low ebb . . . but I am now my very good old self again . . . I joined in the fun and in the work. We joke about our wives and kids, etc. Maybe they have kept something from me. If they have I am stupid or they are good actors. The whole situation rather than any incident seems to spell out the position of the department.
>
> We have developed into a real team within the department of Industrial Education and Technology. There is one other Negro in the department (21 professionals) who has recently been elected president of the local branch of the NAACP. I often hear members of the faculty kid him about racial problems and NAACP activities. They feel free to do this and he comes back at them with no resultant problems. A Jewish colleague, no longer with us, operated in the same manner.

Whites also use joking to establish rapport. This is especially true of whites who frequently come into contact with blacks, such as those with interracial families. In one instance, a white professor with a black husband describes her encounters:

When I was asked to teach one section of Social Work Practice, I called the one 'black' instructor who had taught the course last year. She encouraged me to take the job. Since then we have traded information and material relative to students and teaching. We have become friends. We discuss personal as well as professional business. We joke about our work, families, our adolescents and how frustrating they are at times. Generally speaking, I maintain a 'fun' relationship with my colleagues or like to do so.

Race as an object of humor is salient for the large majority of blacks; however, many whites and blacks in black studies find nothing funny about racial problems. The hostile intent of racial joking is becoming more apparent and professors are finding it increasingly difficult to retreat behind the phrase, "It was only a joke." For instance, during a period of racial disorder at his school, one high ranking black professor at San Francisco State College asked: "On this campus, who has time, or mood to horse around?" Another black agrees that especially in these times, racial joking is likely to be taken in the wrong way:

Tenure year has arrived for three people in my department including myself. There seems no doubt about two of us being granted tenure. The other has been denied the recommendation of the department--apparently necessary if tenure is to be granted. A couple of [department] members--jokingly--so they thought--

suggested that I encountered no difficulty with tenure because I am black. I did not appreciate hearing such comments.

Statements by white professors also reflect an increasing sensitivity to racial joking. Whites who "used to laugh at racial jokes . . . usually freeze now" and some report that"there are fewer race jokes floating around anymore." One white faculty member "find[s] that racial jokes are too hostile or painful to usually laugh," since "racial matters are a serious problem at our school with 14 percent of the students being black." Another white professor relates the decline in racial joking to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

> There are the usual wise cracks about race relations but I feel that a lot of them are in the nature of so-called sick jokes. But I don't recall hearing any at all in the past few months. And, since I've given it some thought, I don't really recall any major so-called racial jokes since Martin Luther King's death. We do though joke about our Negro colleagues's skirts being so short that they catch on her hose.

The motivation behind racial joking is questioned by a white respondent:

> We liberals still feel that we can use the term 'nigger' and laugh at ethnic jokes because we all know we really don't mean it and are not prejudiced. I wonder?

Several blacks only joke with whites who are believed not to be racist. For example:

> I only joke with colleagues that I feel are not racist. An example: We are discussing textbooks, which drifted into comments about the books' black covers. I teased: 'Oh, you don't like <u>black</u> covers, eh?'

A few colleagues feel that they should tell me their favorite Bill Cosby joke. If I like the person I let it go. Otherwise, I am somewhat curt. Some still come up with the 'Joe Lewis sure was a good boxer' routine.

Approximately one-fifth of the whites and blacks generally report that they use jokes as a double-edged sword to do battle with their enemies. Black studies professors are particularly unlikely to use humor as a weapon, however. One black says, for instance, that "I use the designation 'honky' in jest sometimes in referring to certain of my white colleagues." A few blacks offered theories to explain their joking behavior. Among these:

> This is not clowning. This is strategic joking. I think that humor should be a balm to hurt minds. I accuse men of questionable masculinity of being lotharious and they like it.

> Those of my colleagues who have known me for a few years know that I maintain that to make jokes about inequalities and injustices--academic or racial--serves as a wedge to finally crack and destroy the unjust structure. Therefore, we joke about many things, and racial and ethnic areas are fair game for sport.

Below are some of the more caustic examples of hostile joking interchanges which blacks report have taken place between themselves and white faculty:

> Some white male instructors kid me about protecting them in the black revolution--meaning that this has been the role of the black female in the past--protector, peace maker, etc.,

for the black male.

A white colleague once said to me when she observed me picking up candy wrappers someone had dropped in her office, 'For heavens sake, stop acting like a janitor.' My response to her was, 'For heavens sake, stop acting like a white woman.' We both laughed heartily.

Someone in a large faculty meeting used the expression: 'Call a spade a spade.' We joked about this.

I am occasionally teased about resembling Ron Karenga. I sometimes make jokes about racial matters. Upon completing a course in Old English language and literature recently, I remarked to a colleague that it was good to 'get out from under those Anglo-Saxons after all these years.'

A white colleague in describing a near auto accident concluded by saying, 'It would turn you white.' I replied by saying, 'That would be the miracle of the times.'

The white respondents report hostile banter with their black colleagues. One white, for instance, informs us that he calls his "Negro friend a right wing Birchite." A few whites explained why they joke:

Black panther jokes are most abundant in Oakland, California. Eldridge Cleaver jokes are pretty popular in the academic

community. They are a means of preserving one's sanity.

I laugh about racial problems to try to keep a perspective. For example, one of my friends has an interracial marriage and I have an interracial family. We laugh together frequently about the kooky things that happen to us. I suppose it's a kind of tension release.

The statements below, made by white faculty members, illustrate hostile joking with black colleagues:

When a vacancy appeared here during the last year or so we tried to find a Negro academic to fill it with no success. It has become a standing joke to say something like: 'All the black philosophers are in California--all three of them.'

In the context of discussing black power relevant to a newspaper story, someone might inquire whether or not we could get Stokely to teach a course on guerilla warfare.

Another example:

I suggested to a black colleague who has gained weight recently that black may be beautiful, but fat is fat in any color.

Joking also expresses hostility toward oneself as well as toward others. This is especially evident in ethnic humor in which members of a group ridicule themselves. Reik (Fluegel, 1938, p. 718) points

this out in his discussion of Jewish humor in which he detects a hidden "fierce agressiveness against the self, which in turn conceals an agressiveness against the Gentile world, that world in which at bottom is held responsible for the typical deficiencies that Jewish wit seems to recognize and deplore." In short, by "criticising themselves they are really criticising their enemies and oppressors" (Fluegel, 1938, p. 718). Pettigrew (1964, p. 9) documents similar "conscious and unconscious" feelings of self-hate among some American blacks who believe "the din of white racists egotistically insisting that Caucasians are innately superior to Negroes." Fully one-fifth of the blacks, regardless of field, jokingly disparage themselves or other blacks. Although no whites belittled their own racial status, eight percent "put down" their ethnic group membership (whites of Polish, Pennsylvania Dutch, and Jewish extraction, for example).

One case in point is the black professor of education who reports that "I say that after spending so much time and effort to earn an academic degree, I find myself a specialist in education for the disadvantaged by simply being born black." Another black explains "that my hair is wash and wear." Some of the more revealing comments follow:

> If another person has committed an error in his personal contacts with me, mistaken identity, I will sometimes kid and ask if all blacks look alike to him. This is done only with a person who is secure enough to answer yes.

> I'm considered the village idiot. This farce is to keep my 'friends' from 'picking my brains' and using my ideas

as their own.

> I'm rather mischievous by nature and a great lover of practical jokes. I tease my friends and they tease me in a healthy fun loving manner. If my color is sometimes a source of amusement, so it is reversed with my colleagues lack of color or kinky hair. I think everyone's got something a little ridiculous and you have to be able to get a chuckle out of yourself and your own peculiarities.

FORMALITY

Table I shows that whites and blacks generally do not differ in their preference for formal interaction with whites. In fact, most black and white professors prefer informal contacts with their white colleagues. Somewhat fewer faculty--but still a plurality--also favor a more informal atmosphere in their classrooms, although they do not want students to use their first names.

Earlier we suggested that formality is a functional alternative to the joking relationship. The findings for the black studies professors confirm this hypothesis. While blacks in black studies are <u>least</u> likely to (1) joke interracially, (2) joke to establish rapport, or (3) engage in hostile joking, they most often prefer formal interracial encounters.

Blacks in black studies report relations as "much more easy going and natural with blacks" than with whites. One black professor is candid:

> I always have the feeling that our friendship [with white colleagues] is temporary and/or influenced by situational

'demands.' Very generally, I am not convinced that they feel toward me exactly as they feel about their white colleagues; I feel that the distinction is based entirely on race.

Another black respondent explains that he feels awkward with some white colleagues who resent his "title" and:

> . . . who seemed very angry because I received a higher degree. One lady [faculty wife] said, 'I don't ever call my husband Doctor.' I felt that they would have been more pleased if I had burned a building down.

Another example of the use of the polite form is the following description by a black professor of a white woman faculty member:

> One female colleague becomes quite disturbed if the conversation turns to anything remotely related to race relations, discrimination, etc. Because she can only hear her own view of any issue, I simply confine conversation to chit-chat about the weather, etc.

Many white and black faculty members emphasize the reserve and mutual respect that characterizes their interactions. One white professor points out that "I think we are good friends who <u>respect</u> each other." Whites report that their encounters with blacks are "restricted" to "professional" contacts:

> There might be some awkwardness--though I doubt it--if associations were not always professional. In a sense, I am protected by professionalism; I suppose I join with black faculty and students in order to do a job--and the task

orientation of the group eases things.

A black professor confirms this: "Association with my white colleagues in the line of duty has always been professional." Interracial confrontations, therefore, are defined in terms of the professional statuses of the faculty members and this serves to focus interactions. Thus, irrelevant behavior and expectations, i.e., social definitions associated with the racial statuses of professors, are not permitted. Most of these professional relationships, even if long-standing and based on common interests, are not carried beyond the campus. According to a white professor:

> My sole Negro colleague is the only member of my department with whom I feel in accord both professionally and intellectually--perhaps owing to a similarity of educational background. I have not socialized with him outside of campus activities.

Relations between black professors and whites who are not academics are also characterized by formality and "over polite manners":

> Most working class whites who do not know that I teach at this college usually become ill-at-ease when they discover it. The fact, I assume, that I represent that segment of society known to not have the 'basic' skills causes this uneasiness when it is revealed that I am 'Dr.' The future contacts reflect this by their over polite manners and their saying, 'How wonderful it is to have a college education, especially for you.'

Sometimes formal titles, such as "Doc" are used derisively or are conspicuously omitted by whites. According to a black professor:

For example, I moved into a duplex apartment in August, 1967, which was in a predominantly white neighborhood. The services by the manager went down after most of the white families moved out and I have had a running battle with him for the past year to see that services are maintained at what I know they were before. Recently, he tried to belittle me by telling me that only M.D.s deserve to be called doctor and that I was just another ordinary colored man where he is concerned. Who do I think I am making demands?

AVOIDANCE

The data in Table I, where responses to various measures of avoidance are cross-tabulated by race, permit a test of the hypothesized relationship between race and interracial avoidance. Before the findings are discussed, however, we elaborate the hypothesis.

Since people typically have greater autonomy to initiate and maintain voluntary associations than job-required and kinship relations, the former are more likely to be avoided as a result of prejudice and status dilemma. Professors, for example, may not avoid such job-related gatherings as departmental parties and meetings of professional associations, even if they are unpleasant. In these situations, other modes of behavior, such as joking or formality guide the interaction. Furthermore, black professionals may not avoid voluntary contacts when there is something to be gained that compensates for real or anticipated social slights and rebuffs. Kramer (1954), for example, reports that blacks in status dilemma due to membership in prestigious Protestant denominations (Presbyterian, Congregational, and Lutheran) do not avoid church services. He speculates that they attain some non-religious ends by attending, such as making business contacts or

raising their own social standing by associating with others of higher prestige. Kramer (1954) finds, however, that these blacks avoid the "voluntary" social functions of their church: Sunday school programs, youth fellowships, and ladies' and mens' groups.

Assuming that professional memberships are motivated primarily by academic and utilitarian considerations, rather than desire for sociable interactions, blacks should not boycott professional organizations even if they anticipate social slights and rebuffs. The findings for the first avoidance item in Table I, however, do not bear this out since blacks join fewer professional organizations than whites. Black-white differences in membership, however, may be due to differences in field and rank, rather than to race, per se. As Table I shows, utilitarian participation is reflected in actual attendance and stated motives for attendance, rather than in nominal memberships. Black and white faculty attend professional meetings with equal frequency. In addition, blacks are less likely than whites to cite "sociable" motives for their attendance. This is particularly true of blacks in black studies.

The next group of items in Table I concerns civil rights. Assuming that activity in this sphere is intended to improve oneself or one's group rather than to socialize, it follows that blacks should participate more than whites and do so for non-sociable motives. The findings confirm this. In addition, blacks in black studies are more active in civil rights than their black colleagues and regard this activity as a more serious endeavor since they do not cite a multiplicity of motives for their activity.

Participation in community organizations enables blacks to raise their status either directly or indirectly: (1) these organizations support programs designed to reallocate societal rewards and privileges which benefit the black faculty member as an individual and his group; and, (2) association with the prestigious leaders of these organizations indirectly raises the status of black members. This suggests that blacks are more likely than whites to join and participate in community organizations. The findings confirm the hypothesis and indicate that black participation is not motivated by "sociable" motives. Black studies faculty are slightly more active than their black colleagues but do not seek to "socialize" at such meetings. This may be due to the fact that many whites are present; black studies faculty do not attend to "have fun" but to "get things done."

As indicated above, it is not always possible for blacks who anticipate social slights and rebuffs to avoid "voluntary" relationships required by the exigencies of their jobs. Assuming that home visits with colleagues is such a requirement, it follows that blacks are as likely as whites to exchange home visits with white colleagues. The findings support this interpretation. Interracial contact which is not job-related is avoided by blacks, particularly blacks in black studies.

Black faculty should interact with other black scholars more often than whites interact with black professors because: (1) blacks who are rejected by whites tend to be "pushed" toward each other; and, (2) a mutual attraction or "pull" exists between black scholars who share interests and a common fate of status dilemma and prejudice. The findings confirm this. Black studies faculty are particularly likely to report home visits not only with their black colleagues, but also with other blacks.

Since blacks are both "pushed" and "pulled" into relationships with other blacks, they should be "joiners" of predominantly black social clubs. And, indeed, this is true, particularly of black studies faculty. The concluding items deal with membership in predominantly white social organizations, such as country clubs and fraternal orders. Since these memberships are not governed by external imperatives, such as job-related requirements, they are avoided by blacks, especially those in black studies. The finding that blacks and whites attended meetings of integrated social groups with equal likelihood in a two-month period was unanticipated. Two related explanations are offered. First, faculty members in general (whites and blacks) may not have the desire or financial resources to participate actively in country club life. Secondly, the questionnaires were circulated during mid-year examinations. While faculty may have had time to visit colleagues and friends, and to attend (important) meetings of civil rights groups and community organizations, they may not have had time for long afternoons of golf.

In summary, blacks generally do not enter into interracial contact in order to "socialize"; rather, they are oriented towards some task, whether it is to enhance one's professional status, promote civil rights, or improve the community. This is particularly true of blacks in black studies. Blacks generally, especially those in black studies, avoid interracial contacts which are not required by their jobs, and interact frequently with other blacks. Thus, when joking (or formality) does not "save" problematic confrontations between whites and blacks--particularly blacks in black studies--from dissolution, avoidance patterns the relationship.

Avoidance is functional when the veneer of formal civility wears thin as a black professor explains:

> I don't like to be around white people who have been drinking. Many times a person's true feelings come out under the influence of alcohol. This was true of a white roommate I had during my graduate school years. We went to a bar and after a few drinks, he made an off-color remark which 'turned me off.' I moved out of the room at the end of the semester. This has happened on other occasions also. I now feel that most or a majority of professed liberals are basically insincere and hypocrites.

Thus many blacks tend to avoid whites. In addition, many of the blacks believe that their white colleagues intentionally avoid them. Incredibly, one black faculty member reports that "there are two [professors] in the department who still do not feel free enough with me to answer when I speak!" Another says that he is "not welcomed to participate in their more intimate inner circles." Below, three black professors describe white avoidance:

> In my department there is no strained feeling among my colleagues but with others in the college there is a feeling that one doesn't exist. One incident: a professor from another department who knows me passed by me and introduced a visitingwhite professor to another instructor (white) and acted as if I weren't there. The room had only 5 people in it at the time. The other person was introduced also.

> Such encounters vary depending upon the sex of my colleagues as well as color. As a Negro woman working in a predominantly

white, male institution, I find that colleagues frequently are either ill-at-ease in my presence or they ignore me completely. Incident: I was seated at a table in the Faculty Dining Room. I was the only Negro there. No one was talking until an instructor came to the table. He introduced himself to all at the table (4 or 5) except me. This broke the ice and a general conversation ensued. Since I had been so pointedly ignored, I felt uncomfortable and I did not attempt to enter into conversation with anyone.

A few of us (black and white) decided that getting together in some regular way to talk about racial matters might be helpful. One colleague (white) said she would call such a meeting. When I learned that the meeting had been held without any of the Black faculty present, and confronted her with this knowledge, asking why this had happened, her response was that the white members who had agreed to meet had felt that hostile feelings might have come to the surface and would be difficult to deal with.

Black professors also avoid and are ignored by working class whites, as the statements below illustrate:

I recently attended a meeting of a professional committee in another town. The waitress in the hotel where I had breakfast was very clear in the difference in the treatment afforded me and the whites with whom I was sitting. She had difficulty asking what I wanted or whether I wanted more coffee. She simply presented herself and stood. With my colleagues, she

was outgoing and appeared friendly. For my part, I was tempted to simply wait until she addressed me but after a strained minute I asked if she was ready to take my order. She nodded.

I went to get my car fixed and the white garage guy was talking to a lady and I felt awkward, not being able to interrupt the conversation or draw attention to my presence. He finally directed his attention to me, but I got 'on the humble' to elicit his interest in my car. I feel always that most working class whites are pro-Wallacites and that they are more prone to give you trouble in face-to-face encounters these days.

My encounters as a Black person with working class whites are slightly awkward particularly if the white person is encountered in a situation where I am, at first, seen as just another Black person who can be ignored or deprecated. As a defense against this situation, I find that I usually avoid encounters with working class whites except in a situation where my prestige (professional identity) or my buying power establishes me as a person who will not accept or tolerate deprecation. It is probably true that I avoid as many of these encounters as I can. Otherwise, I am usually guarded and careful not to put myself in a position where I cannot control my relationships.

CONCLUSION

We have investigated the links between race and joking, formal, and avoidance relations. The guiding assumption of the study was that joking, formality, and avoidance conjoin black and white professors whose interests diverge due to prejudice and status dilemma. A comparison of samples of black and white professors in predominantly white, non-southern colleges and universities confirms that interracial encounters are indeed patterned in this manner. In addition, joking and formality appear to be functional alternatives. Thus, while blacks in black studies are less likely than their black colleagues to pattern interracial confrontations by joking, they more often prefer formal relations with whites or avoid them altogether.

We must not overlook two important patterns in the data: (1) on many of the measures, the absolute differences between the whites and blacks--although statistically significant--are not great; and, (2) the majority of the members of both groups are not particularly formal or jocular. For instance, while blacks are more likely than whites to prefer that their white colleagues use their academic titles or "Mister," more than 90 percent of both groups prefer to be on a first name basis with their colleagues.

Finally, joking, avoidance, and formality are not necessarily signs of hostility, conflict, and insensitivity. To the contrary, avoidance indicates sensitivity to one's own feelings and to the feelings of others (Goffman, 1957). These modes df interaction prevent conflict which might otherwise result from prejudice and status ambiguity. Radcliffe-Brown (1952, p. 92) explains:

> One does, of course, if one is wise, avoid having too much to

do with one's enemies, but that is quite a different matter. I once asked an Australian native why he had to avoid his mother-in-law, and his reply was, 'Because she is my best friend in the world; she has given me my wife.' The mutual respect between son-in-law and parents-in-law is a mode of friendship. It prevents conflict that might arise through divergence of interest.

TABLE I* Percentage Distribution of the Responses of White Faculty, Black Faculty, and Blacks Teaching in Black Studies Programs on Three Instruments: Joking, Formality and Avoidance

Items (and Response Categories)	All Whites N=442	Blacks	
		All Blacks N=254	Black Studies N=206
Joking			
How often do you joke, kid or horse around with your white colleagues at work? (A great deal or often)	74	80	63¢
How Often does this activity deal with racial matters? (Never)	38	12¢	42
Rapport-establishing function of joking mentioned in statements.	26	41¢	25
Hostile intent of joking mentioned in statements-- hostility directed toward others.	19	17	6¢
Hostile intent of joking mentioned in statements-hostility directed toward self or members of one's racial or ethnic group	8	16¢	20¢
Formality			
I prefer a more informal atmosphere in my relationships with my white colleagues.(Agree)	93	92	81¢
I prefer that my white colleagues use my first name, rather than my title or "Mr." (Agree)	96	91	80¢
I prefer a more informal atmosphere in my relationships with my white students in the classroom. (Agree)	72	71	48¢
I prefer that my white students use my first name, rather than my title or "Mrs." (Agree)	22	16	5¢

* Table continued on following page.

¢ Significantly different from All Whites at .01

TABLE I* (continued)

Items (and Response Categories)	All Whites N=442	Blacks: All Blacks N=554	Blacks: Black Studies N=206
Avoidance			
Memberships in professional organizations. (5 or more)	40	31¢	26¢
Professional meetings attended in past year. (5 or more)	26	26	27
Professional meetings attended in past two months.(3 or more)	10	14	12
One reason I attend professional meetings is to socialize. (Agree)	68	36¢	19¢
Memberships in civil rights groups. (1 or more)	25	64¢	78¢
Civil rights meetings attended in past two months. (3 or more)	1	19¢	25¢
One reason I attend meetings of civil rights groups is to socialize. (Agree)	26	14¢	6¢
Memberships in community organizations, such as Parent-Teacher Association, Chamber of Commerce. (3 or more)	10	18¢	24¢
Community Organization meetings attended in past two months. (3 or more)	14	22¢	25¢
One reason I attend meetings of community organizations is to socialize. (Agree)	45	18¢	5¢
Home visits exchanged with white colleagues in past two months. (5 or more)	26	24	20¢
Home visits exchanged with other whites in past two months.(5 or more)	33	25¢	9¢
Home visits exchanged with black colleagues in past two months. (3 or more)	2	31¢	49¢
Home visits exchanged with other blacks in past two months. (3 or more)	5	62¢	75¢
Memberships in predominantly black social clubs. (1 or more)	0	48¢	53¢

* Table continued on following page

TABLE I (continued)

Items (and Response Categories)	All Whites N=442	Blacks	
		All Blacks N-554	All Studies N=206
Black social club meetings attended in past two months. (3 or more)	0	6	8
Memberships in predominantly white social clubs. (1 or more)	32	24¢	11¢
White social club meetings attended in past two months. (3 or more)	7	3	1

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